

Home Visiting in Maryland

News from the Old Line State

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Maryland Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting News

We're closing out another great year at the Maryland Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV)! Some of the year's highlights include:

- The third annual home visiting conference for our MIECHV programs in Ocean City, Md this past September
- The roll-out of our brand-new, customized data system Maxwell, which gives our sites much more control over and access to their sites' data
- A second successful career and resource fair for those interested in the home visiting field
- The piloting of two new trainings -- one focused on improving home visitors' skills with family goal planning, and the other on working with families dealing with Substance Exposed Newborns (SEN)
- The continued roll out of the home visiting training certificate program that has trained more than 50 individuals this past funding year
- A home visitor-chosen research project this coming year, to make evaluation relevant and real for those of us in the field

We are grateful to the staff of our home visiting programs across the state for their continued commitment to improving the lives of our children and their families. We wish you a happy and healthy 2019 from the Maryland MIECHV family.

Unsung Chronicles of Home Visiting

Soaring to Great Heights!

A Celebration at Healthy Families Prince George's

Contributed by Alyson Jacobson, LCSW-C, M. Ed

Prince George's Child Resource Center (PGCRC) and Healthy Families Prince George's (HFPG) celebrated their 2018 graduates in a special ceremony on Nov. 30. Twelve families and 14 children successfully completed the program within the last year.



The graduation ceremony included welcome messages from Jennifer Iverson, executive director of PGCRC, Tianya Edgerton, board president of PGCRC, and Alyson Jacobson, program director of HFPG. Susan McPherson from the Adelphi/Langley Park Judy Hoyer Learning Center shared an inspirational message about transitions to early education settings and how parents remain their child's number one teacher, reminding them that this ending is just a new beginning. All the graduating children were given a new backpack with fun gifts to encourage reading and writing, new books, and a special bag from the Judy Hoyer Learning Center.

The highlight of the day, however, was seeing the participants again. The parents shared how the program has impacted their lives and the goals they continue to set after they have completed Healthy Families. One mother, who is still in the program and set to graduate

soon, shared that when home visiting services were offered to her, she didn't think she needed them because she already had three children. During her speech she said, "Being in the



program helped me recognize post-partum depression that I had experienced with my other children but didn't realize; having my Family Support Specialist (FSS) visit weekly was a big part in the way I am nurturing my children today. I learned so much in this program and I haven't even graduated yet!" She continued to encourage the other parents to stay in the program for as long as they can.

Healthy Families Prince George's would like to publicly thank their generous funders for making it possible for this kind of celebration every year.

Positive Strides in Caroline County

Contributed by Jennifer Sedgwick, Family Support Worker, Caroline County Healthy Families

Sara enrolled in the Healthy Families Caroline County program during her pregnancy. Although she had a positive relationship with her boyfriend, she lived with his family in an unstable housing situation. Sara was working a part-time job that did not bring her joy and expressed no real hope or motivation to improve her situation. Sara and her boyfriend provided most of her son's basic needs but were not consistent, resulting in the child's diagnosis of non-organic failure to thrive. Sara initially did not take responsibility for her son's feeding routine and saw the diagnosis as an uncontrollable health problem.

Sara began participating in the Growing Great Kids curriculum-based Healthy Families home visits. Over time, she slowly began to express some interest in learning more about her son's growth and development by participating in the education and activities that were provided during the home visits. With her home visitor's support and nutritional guidance, in addition to support from her son's pediatrician, Sara was able to create and stick to a feeding schedule that resulted in stable and consistent weight gain for her son.

As Sara became more empowered in her parenting skills, she began to develop confidence in other areas of her life as well. She enrolled in a local university program and was able to complete her Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and phlebotomy credential. Sara's newfound confidence helped her prepare for finding more stable housing, which led to Sara and her boyfriend moving into their very own apartment.

Sara has continued to participate in Healthy Families home visits and has expressed an interest in ensuring her son enters school ready for pre-kindergarten. She has taken the time and effort to follow up and practice activities presented during the visits. She has been open to accepting support and resources from other outside agencies that can provide additional resources to address her son's needs and development. These efforts reflect in all of her son's preschool readiness and self-regulation skills. Sara and her boyfriend were recently married and continue to demonstrate how they value the importance of early childhood education. They continue to build on this at home by creating an empathic, nurturing, and stable environment.

Provider Perspective

Enoch Pratt Free Library System is one of "10 Nicest Places in America"

This past fall, Good Morning America highlighted Baltimore City's very own [Enoch Pratt Free Library](#).

which was named by Reader's Digest as a finalist on its list of "10 Nicest Places in America." The segment discusses the library system's focus on community services, such as job assistance, a free legal aid clinic, and access to on-site social workers.

One of our home visiting programs, DRU/Mondawmin (DRUM) Healthy Families, has a literacy partnership with the library system. A new cohort of 10 DRUM families meets every week to learn techniques that encourage family reading. By the end of the program, each family will have 24 new books to build their home libraries. The program relaunches with a third cohort in the new year.



We at Maryland MIECHV are thankful for all the good work the library system does for families in Baltimore City. Read the full Reader's Digest write-up and view the Good Morning America segment [here](#).

Program Spotlight

Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Enhancements

As part of Governor Larry Hogan's fight against the heroin and opioid epidemic in Maryland, effective July 1, 2018, health care prescribers and pharmacists are required to check the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) in [certain prescribing or dispensing situations](#), such as before beginning a new course of treatment with opioids or benzodiazepines. The Hogan Administration championed legislation expanding the PDMP with this requirement, as well as requiring mandatory registration for all providers that have a license to prescribe or dispense controlled dangerous substances.

The PDMP, implemented by the Maryland Department of Health's Behavioral Health Administration, collects and securely stores information on drugs that contain controlled dangerous substances (CDS) and are dispensed to patients in Maryland. Drug dispensers - health care providers and pharmacists - electronically report the information that is stored in the PDMP database.

Access to prescription data is made available at no cost to health care providers and pharmacists through the Chesapeake Regional Information System (CRISP), Maryland's state designated health information exchange. The information is delivered through the secure, web based portal and directly within electronic health record systems. The number of prescription data accessed has more than doubled over the last six months, with almost 250,000 queries each week. This accomplishment is a result of PDMP and CRISP prioritizing innovative methods of delivering PDMP data within the electronic workflow.

Read the full press release [here](#).

Promising Practice

Building Team Spirit!

Leadership Workshop Held for Maryland Healthy Families

Contributed by Alyson Jacobson, LCSW-C, M.Ed

Under the leadership of Janet Curran from Healthy Families Montgomery and Tomeaka Jupiter from Healthy Families Baltimore County, a group of Maryland Healthy Families site directors planned and held *Building Team Spirit! A Leadership Workshop for Supervisors* on Oct. 2 at Abilities Network, Inc. in Baltimore County. Members of the planning committee were Sharon Clements from The Family Tree, Baltimore City, Erica Taylor from Healthy Families Baltimore County, Monet McQuay from Healthy Families Baltimore County, and Alyson Jacobson from Healthy Families Prince George's.

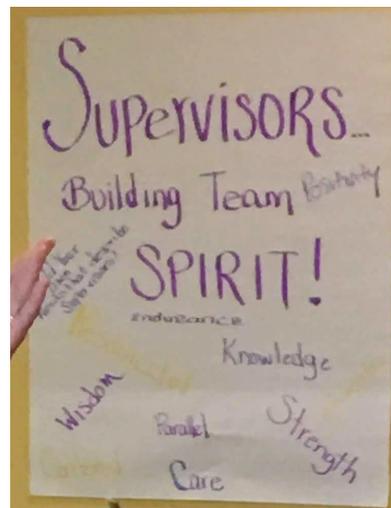
Decorated just like a pep rally in purple, black and gold, each attendee received their own pompom, pennant, and megaphone to take home as a reminder of the day their program managers cheered them on to success and well-being. Sharon Clements welcomed the group and then the day started with stress management strategies involving music and movement. Alyson



Jacobson led competitive cheers and Monet McQuay facilitated a time for all attendees to dream big and create their personal visions for their work and/or personal lives. Janet Curran then helped to provide a catered and nourishing lunch to bring the morning session to a productive end with plenty of time to reflect on all the lunches missed by supervisors in the office.

In the afternoon, Alyson Jacobson led the Supervisor's Café, a reflective opportunity to discuss the challenges and rewards of being in the supervisor position. The Café was adapted by Ms. Jacobson from the Parent Café developed by Strengthening Families¹, which focuses on promoting the protective factors of supervisors, including supervisor's resilience, knowledge of supervision skills and staff development, social emotional competence of staff, social connections, and concrete support in supervisor's time of need. Attendees agreed that these five protective factors are vital to the success of a supervisor.

At the end of the day, supervisors were treated to "build-your-own" ice cream sundaes. Supervisors reported that this day was refreshing and inspiring, educational and collaborative, and they feel much more connected to other supervisors in the area. They report that they will use these new social connections to prevent burn out and stress in the future.



The workshop's emphasis on self-care, dreaming big, and setting personal goals is consistent with the Healthy Families America core belief of the parallel process - when supervisors have access to these five protective factors they are able to share them with direct staff, who are empowered to pass the protective factors on to the families on their caseload.

¹ [Strengthening Families](#), a project of the Center for the Study of Social Policy

CQI Corner

Consultant's Update

Contributed by Maelondy Holman, Ed.D, Continuous Quality Improvement Consultant, MD MIECHV



Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) consultant Dr. Holman is the coordinator of the annual Home Visiting Career and Resource Fair, which is geared toward workforce development. This year's event was held on Thursday, Dec. 15. The purpose of the event was to promote home visiting while also enlightening participants about relevant resources available to them throughout the state of

Maryland. Some of the home visiting programs set up exhibitor tables to share information about their specific sites. Hiring managers for the sites also had the ability to connect with potential job candidates during the event. Overall, it was a great success with a wonderful turnout.

In efforts to better support all sixteen Maryland MIECHV sites, Dr. Holman successfully completed the Lean Six Sigma Green Belt course and earned the certification from Georgia Tech Institute of Technology. Dr. Holman is also busy planning for the future of CQI among Maryland MIECHV sites and how it will interface with Maxwell, the new database system that is now officially in use.

Some of our home visiting sites are currently working on a CQI topic to address data collection quality and the use of tablets that were recently issued to all home visiting staff by the state MIECHV team. Other topics that sites are working on are family retention and home visiting completion rates. These topics have carried over from previous quarters.

Dynamic Data

Results from the Mother and Infant Home Visiting Program Evaluation

This past October, the Mother and Infant Home Visiting Program Evaluation (MIHOPE), a national evaluation of the federal MIECHV program, released its first implementation report. The evaluation, which began in 2011, has been studying participating programs from four of the federally-approved evidence-based models - Healthy Families America, Parents as Teachers, Early Head Start, and Nurse Family Partnership. The study's two primary research questions were:

1. What services did families receive in home visiting programs

2. How are characteristics of families, home visitors, local programs, other home visiting stakeholders (such as the federal MIECHV program and evidence-based models), and communities associated with differences in the services that families received

Though no programs in Maryland participated in MIHOPE, the results of the evaluation are of interest to MIECHV programs in the state, since nearly all use the Healthy Families America model. These findings from the field between 2012 and 2016 can be used to help make improvements to the programs to better meet the needs of the families we serve.

Some highlights from the report:

- Local MIECHV-funded programs served families in disadvantaged communities with higher than average levels of risk
- Consistent with prior research, families participated in home visiting for eight months on average and families with relatively more challenges and barriers, including first-time mothers and less-educated mothers, participated for a shorter time
- Services were tailored to family needs; home visitors with specific training and screening protocols on sensitive topics addressed them more often with families
- Local programs reported that their community offered multiple types of services that families need, but home visitors reported that barriers prevented families from accessing and benefiting from these resources

Overall, the report's findings fit with prior research and understanding of home visiting and provide an evidence-based roadmap for how to focus our efforts moving forward. The full report is available [here](#).

Policy Tidbits

Policy Brief from Zero to Three

In early December, [Zero to Three](#) released a policy brief outlining six timely actions that can be taken at the federal and state levels to improve outcomes for children and their families. Though not comprehensive, the groundwork for these opportunities has been laid and therefore each is ripe for action. Zero to Three's policy recommendations are:

- Ensure all children and parents have health insurance coverage
- Extend paid family and medical leave and paid sick leave to all workers
- Promote access to high-quality jobs for parents of infants and toddlers
- Ensure all families can access high-quality early care and education
- Make sure the child welfare system promotes the healthy development of infants and toddlers experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, maltreatment
- Ensure the mental health system adequately addresses the unique needs of infants, toddlers, and their families

[Download the report](#) to read more about each policy.

Resources and Updates

Tis the Season for Keeping Kids Warm and Safe in Their Car Seat Straps

The cold weather has arrived, and so has the season for heavy clothing, jackets, and blanket-like products. Unfortunately, car seat straps and bulky winter clothing/blankets are not a safe mix. This is because the poly-fill materials found in the winter jackets, snow suits, and blankets are filled with air. While the bulk of a winter jacket or blanket may make it look like the child's car seat straps are firmly in place, the material prevents the straps from actually fitting correctly. The straps sometimes even appear to be too tight, leading the parent to loosen the straps. Both of these situations are extremely dangerous if a crash were to occur.

To keep a child warm once they are correctly secured in their car seats, parents can place a blanket over the child or, for older children, the jacket can be placed on backwards over the straps. [This video](#) and [corresponding article](#) can be used to teach caregivers about the danger of using bulky jackets, snowsuits, and blanket inserts when a child is in a car seat. Viewers can also run their own test by following the instructions in the video report.

For more child passenger safety information, please contact Kids In Safety Seats at 800-370-SEAT or 410-767-6016.

How Sleep Savvy Are You?

The National Institute for Children's Health Quality (NICHQ) has put together a brief safe sleep video "quiz" that providers can use with their families to assess their understanding of safe sleep environments. The video is available in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#). We encourage you to share widely with your programs and staff!

Upcoming Events and Trainings

No upcoming events or trainings at this time.

Get in Touch

The newsletter team wants to hear from you! Please contact us with questions, comments, and suggestions for content. We can be reached by [email](#) or phone: (410) 767-7066. For more information on home visiting in Maryland, [visit our website](#). Not subscribed yet? [Sign up here](#).

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